1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

There are many greetings which are adjusted to social rank, so that one can say "Hello" to a social inferior, to an equal, or to a respected superior, and receive a proper reply recognizing the same distinction. People from other areas of Nigeria and Europeans claim it is a difficult language to learn. But this is probably due to the fact that the most widespread language of Northern Nigeria is Hausa, and many outsiders find they can get along with Hausa in the cities and larger towns without having to make the effort to learn Kanuri. Certainly today most Kanuri school children know some Hausa, and facility with it is spreading throughout all of Northern Nigeria.

Distinctive Kanuri cultural features, things which are of unique Kanuri origin, are not necessarily vitally important things. But they are, if you like, diagnostic features that indicate Bornu-ness in contrast to the cultures of other closely related ethnic groups in the Sudan. Perhaps the most striking feature is the women's hair style. At its most resplendent, it resembles the form of a Trojan helmet made out of an enormous braided ponytail that begins as a crest at the front-center of the head and curves up over the head to end in a slight upward curl of the tail at the back. Today a few of the young school girls are beginning to give up this traditional Kanuri coiffure and are taking on instead the Shuwa-Arab style of a smooth top of the head with hundreds of small braids clinging tightly to the sides and back of the head, at the ends of which are either loose ringlets or a pageboy effect.

Other features which are unique to Bornu are their knives and calabash carvings. These items are also unique to each ethnic group in the region, as are tribal marks cut on the face. Thus many unique features of Kanuri traditional life are thought of locally by many peoples as differentiating criteria for separating one ethnic group from another. A Northern Nigerian going to a market in Jos, or Maiduguri, or Kano, can spot a Kanuri, Fulani, or a Hausa calabash design at a glance just as he can tell another person's ethnic group by his tribal marks, or spot a Bornu knife among a pile of others.

On the other hand, the inside of a Kanuri gentleman's household is not significantly different from the household of a man of similar rank, wealth, occupation, and education, who lives in Hausa country seven or eight hundred miles to the west of Bornu. They dress in a very similar manner, eat very similar food, and share many of the same beliefs and attitudes about what is the best way to live, make decisions, treat one's family, friends, superiors, and worship one's God. Thus although there are some clear-cut diagnostic features representative of Kanuri culture, the people share in a way of life that is practiced by millions in the Sudan, or southern savannah land border of the Sahara desert.

Gathering the Material

I first arrived in Bornu in January 1956 and stayed there until August 1957. My next contacts occurred in the summers of 1964 and again in 1965, and hopefully I shall return in the future to study specialized topics to deepen my understanding of this society as it changes and progresses in the modern world. During our first visit my wife and I spent most of our time in the small village of Magumeri about thirty-three miles northwest of the capital. This was our home base. From here we also visited other parts of the emirate, especially the larger village of

[GEIDAM]

634 dam once again, it is evident that one group is a modern group
178 177 which has no counterpart in traditional Kanuri society. This
554 is a group of NA appointees including the Primary School Head-
master and the three school teachers, the Agricultural expert,
the Veterinary, the Hides and Skins Inspector, the Forestry
expert, the Local Government Advisor, the Adult Education Organ-
[191] izer, the Dispenser, and the Sanitation Inspector. All of these
[871] individuals have been educated in Western schools, most through
[863] secondary school, and all speak some English. They have all
received specialized training for their jobs. In addition,
all are young men or young adult men. Because they have all
been educated, they are addressed as "Malam," an extension of
the term for a Koranic scholar to new areas of scholarship.
(They will be referred to henceforth as "NA Malams".)

634 Despite the fact that the use of the term Malam indicates
177 554 a general recognition of their scholarly attainments, the NA
565 Malams are a part of the political system, under the jurisdic-
871 tion of the Ajia. Most of the NA Malams in Geidam are sons of
Lowans or Ajias, or have some direct connection with the house-
hold of a Lowan or Ajia. This is because the aristocracy and
those in political power have been more likely to send their
[829] sons to school than the talaka. Talaka are loath to send
their children to the Western school as they are needed at
home to assist in farming, and because parents see nothing to
[555] be gained by sending one's child to the school. Lowans, how-
ever, are themselves pressured to set a good example, and they

124 *634 seven year old Kabuna are probably among the youngest members of the entire group. This is because Yerima Mustapha will keep potential Kabuna in minor positions for some years before he feels that they are ready for the responsibility of performing [121] a Kabuna's role and gives them a horse. Although age is probably a variable in determining an individual's degree of acculturation, it is secondary to his position within a given group or category as will be demonstrated in the succeeding *634 *177 pages of this section. Though the Kabuna are older as a group, they nevertheless tend to be acculturated in specific areas. Though the NA Malams are younger as a group, they tend to be acculturated in certain areas and not in others. Age as a variable will be examined in detail in a later section.

A. Analysis of Responses to the Thirty Acculturation Measures.

*177 • 191 The first acculturation measure to be discussed is knowledge of languages other than Kanuri, presented as Table XVI. Twenty-seven members of the sample speak some Hausa; 18 speak Hausa well; 9 speak a little Hausa. Sixteen speakers of Hausa * [565] *† [463] are found in three groups: Aristocracy (4), Canteen Operators (6), NA Malams (6). This is clearly related to the importance of the Hausa language in two spheres of activity: trade and *177 191 441 administration. All of the traders speak some Hausa; this is because Hausa is widespread as the trade language throughout Northern Nigeria. Europeans in trade learn to speak Hausa rather

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Table XVI

1. Knowledge of other Languages aside from Kanuri

	Hausa: yes	little	no	English: yes	little	no	Other
Aristocracy	4	-	1	-	1	4	Little Shuwa - 1 Kanembu - 1
Koranic Malams	1	-	2	-	-	3	Arabic - 1
Canteen Operators	3	3	-	-	-	6	Little Shuwa - 1
NA Malams	6	-	-	6	-	-	Shuwa - 2; little Shuwa - 1; Fulani - 1; little Fulani-1; Mandara - 1
Kabuna	-	3	3	-	-	6	Little Fulani - 1
Craftsmen	1	-	5	-	-	6	Fulani - 1
Talaka	3	3	2	-	-	8	Fulani - 1 Tubo - 1
Low-status individuals	-	-	4	-	-	4	Little Shuwa - 1
Totals:	18	9	17	6	1	37	Shuwa - 6 Fulani - 5 Arabic - 1 Kanembu - 1 Mandara - 1 Tubo - 1 15

than Kanuri, and communication with the managers of the various trading companies in Geidam is in Hausa. Knowledge of Hausa among the Kanuri canteen operators is reflected in their attitudes towards the Hausa generally. This can be seen in the willingness of the Canteen Operators to marry Hausa women (see Table XXXV). Hausa is also the language of the colonial bureaucracy in Northern Nigeria, and all Europeans in administration have learned to speak Hausa. The number of Kanuri speakers among the European administrative personnel in Bornu Province is negligible. Therefore most of the Aristocracy and all of the NA Malams speak Hausa. In the remaining five groups, 11 individuals speak Hausa and 16 do not. Most of the lower class groups do not have much contact with Hausas and consequently do not speak their language.

With respect to knowledge of English, the picture is even more clear-cut. Only seven people in the sample speak English. One aristocrat (Yerima Mustapha) speaks a little English, and the entire group of NA Malams, all having been educated in European-style schools, speak English. No one else has any knowledge of the language.

It is interesting to note that knowledge of other languages is a common occurrence in this area. Fifteen cases of speakers of six additional languages are found in this small sample. Of course a few individuals speak several languages, while others speak only Kanuri. There are six speakers of Shuwa Arabic, and five speakers of Fulani represented. There are almost as many

*177 speakers of these languages as of English. It has been noted
• 191 that both Shuwa and Fulani pastoralists are found in consider-
[563] able numbers in Bornu Province. The members of the group of
*[634] NA Malams seem to be outstanding in their knowledge of other languages. Not only do they all speak Hausa and English, but three in addition speak Shuwa Arabic, two speak Fulani, and one speaks Mandara.

*177 Turning to reading ability (Table XVII), it can be seen
212 that 15 of the sample (34 per cent) are able to read in English script, while 24 of the sample (54.5 per cent) are capable of reading in Arabic script. Writing the Kanuri language in Arabic script preceded the entry of the British into the area by several centuries; the British introduced writing in Latin (English) script and have taught this form of writing in the schools. It is clear that many more individuals are capable of writing in Arabic script today than in English script. It is also apparent that almost half of the sample are illiterate in any script.

*[565] Of those who can write well in English script, 10 of the
*[634] 11 fall into two groups: the Aristocracy and the NA Malams. Most of the individuals in the six other groups are unable to write in English script. The pattern of those who are capable
*[634] of writing in Arabic script is quite different. Once again the NA Malams are an outstanding group. Not only can they all write
[792] in English script, but all can also write in Arabic script. Of course the Koranic Malams can also all write in Arabic script.

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[BEIDAN]

*177 405 *565 *634 [441] *177 493 *565 *634 441 [792] own and keep a wrist watch. They also differ from the group of Canteen Operators who could easily afford a wrist watch, though only two in the group own watches. Essentially the same pattern is repeated in the next column (ownership of a bicycle), but as a bicycle is much more expensive than a wrist watch, many fewer people own or have owned a bicycle. Those who own a bicycle are to be found in three groups: Aristocracy, Canteen Operators, and NA Malams, except for one Talaka who also owns a bicycle. In two of the groups none of the individuals have ever owned a bicycle: the Koranic Malams and the Kabuna. In the case of the Kabuna, whose work is so closely tied to their possession of a horse, it is clear why they have never owned bicycles.

*177 207 *191 *[565] [441] *[634] Radios are expensive items, though not as expensive as bicycles. On the other hand their usefulness is much more limited. Possession is limited entirely to the three groups who predominated in the previous columns: the Aristocrats, the Canteen Operators and the NA Malams, and of the three groups the NA Malams outdistance the others since all members of the group own a radio. Another factor must be mentioned at this point. The Nigerian Broadcasting Company broadcasts in the Kanuri language for only one hour each week. However, broadcasting in Hausa is very frequent, and of course English language broadcasts can be found constantly on various bands of the short-wave radio. For one who speaks only Kanuri, therefore, a radio is of only moderate usefulness. In the three

radio-owning groups knowledge of the Hausa language is almost unanimous. In addition, all of the NA Malams speak English (see Table XVI) as well, so that they can most benefit from possession of a radio, and in fact the entire group owns radios.

Many individuals own photographs of themselves, but once again the three groups who owned wrist watches, bicycles and radios also tend to have photographs of themselves. In the case of the Canteen Operators an extraneous factor enters. Five of the six Canteen Operators have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in the course of making the trip, have had passport photographs taken of themselves. Three groups, the Koranic Malams, the Kabuna, and the Low-status Individuals have never had photographs taken of them, and among the Talaka only one of the eight has had his photograph taken.

The last column in Table XVIII notes possession, or previous ownership of a horse. A horse is of course not an item of Western origin. It is included here to provide a comparison with some of the Western items previously discussed, particularly the bicycle. In only four groups are there to be found individuals who have never owned a horse. Five of the Talaka have never owned a horse, and in fact none of the eight Talaka owns a horse at present. Two of the NA Malams have never owned horses and it is clear that for members of this group the expense of buying and keeping a horse is not the primary factor as it is for most of the lower class groups. Two other NA Malams own horses which they do not keep in Geidam as they have little use for them. In comparison, five of the six NA Malams own bicycles.

114
123 a medium sized rural Kanuri town, learning the language (1) and making contacts among the local residents.

In approximately four months the writer could carry on interviews in the language, and by the end of the eighth, an outline of political and economic structure in the area was gained, plus some understanding of kinship, cultural values, and household economics. Although participant observation techniques continued until the end of the field trip, it was now deemed possible to introduce some quantitative techniques into data collection. For this purpose, questionnaires were designed on market involvement of peasant cultivators, kinship behaviour norms, marriage preferences among tribes, ranking of traditional and non-traditional occupations and a scheduled interview was made up concerning household income and expenditure. A Kanuri assistant was hired to conduct the surveys on market involvement of peasant cultivators and kinship behaviour norms. In addition, he kept records on the crop production techniques and amounts harvested as well as daily intake of the staple grain food, for seventy-five farmers in three towns.

114 The complexity of Kanuri society makes generalizations based on intensive work in only one community extremely precarious. Thus other parts of Bornu were visited, especially the capital Maiduguri, and Geidam, a district capital in the northern part of the Emirate. Side trips to Dikwa and Biu Emirate and Damboa and Dematuru districts helped to broaden the perspectives of observation made on the basis of a long term stay in Magumeri. Innumerable visits on horseback to small [184] hamlets helped in this respect as well. Finally, the variations possible in Kanuri social life were made even more apparent by the presence

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124 (1) An interpreter was employed for the first ten days and then departed leaving the writer and wife with only one person, the local school teacher, who could speak only a very little English.
191

121 and complexity of stratification.(1) Or to put it another way, these differences are quantitative not qualitative.

The concept of class is restricted in its application to societies having greater ranges and more dimensions of stratification, either through conquest(s) or peaceful elaboration and differentiation. The chief characteristics of class are, (1) its somewhat distinctive style of life within the overall culture of the society, and (2) the differential rankings accorded to class status as a rank among others within the total society.

Of the two concepts, class and stratification, it is felt [829] here that the latter is the more useful. The Kanuri, themselves, recognize classes in their society but, unless the dimensions of stratification are thoroughly understood, the differentiation of Kanuri society is a mystery, which the class concept alone cannot penetrate.

The Dimensions of Stratification

Tribal Membership

829 The Kanuri, like many other peoples all over the world, take a great pride in their culture, its religion, language, social organ-
582 ization, and its history, some of which is known by everyone. As far as
563 can be reported without any precise measurement the tribe is largely
191 endogamous,(2) although there is more inter-tribal marriage in the capital where language barriers count for less because of the growing use of Hausa as well as Kanuri.

829 There is a value placed upon a platonic or ideal quality of

(1) cf. Smith, M.G., On Segmentary Lineage Systems, op. cit. He does the same thing in his analysis of state and stateless societies.

(2) In Magumeri among approximately seventy households, there were six marriages of men or women which included Non-Kanuri spouses. One of these was of a recent Muslim convert to a Kanuri woman, another was of a pagan man with two rather pariah Kanuri women, while the rest were all between non-Kanuri Muslims.